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NATO--A STRATEGIC DISSENSUS

JOHN PUGH

1974

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NATO -- A STRATEGIC DISSENSUS

An action study submitted as partial fulfillment
of requirements for the degree of Master of Public
Affairs from the Graduate School of Public Affairs
of the University of Washington.

Jon Pugh
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.	Page 1
From Massive Retaliation to Assured Destruction	3
The Berlin Crisis	3
The Vulnerability Problem	6
The Countervalue of Assured Destruction	10
Damage Limitation Abandoned as a Goal	15
Limited ABM Development	17
NATO - A Strategic Dissensus	19
The Ambiguity Aspect of the U.S. Nuclear Deterrent	24
Strategic Contradiction and the U.S. Nuclear Guarantee	28
Weakening of America's NATO Commitment	29
Lessons from the Berlin Crisis	32
Summary	33
 Roles of Tactical Nuclear Weapons	 35
The Radford Plan	36
Tactical Nuclear Weapons as a Viable Option	37
Questioning the Assumptions Supporting Tactical Nuclear Weapons	38
Conventional Force Build-Up	41
The Uncertain Trumpet	45
The Evolution of Flexible Response	46
Flexible Response and Arms Limitation	50
Summary - The Dissensus Today	55
 Independent European Nuclear Forces	 60
Rationale for British Independent Forces	60
Special Relationship Between U.S. & Britain	61
Rationale For French Independent Forces	65
DeGaulle's European Policy	67
Influencing Common Decisions	70
The Need for Centralized Control	72
MLF	74
 Solving The Dissensus -- A New NATO Strategy	 79
 Bibliography	 87

INTRODUCTION

A generation after the founding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United States faces complex problems in its relations with western Europe. The early postwar European dependence upon the United States in the aftermath of war has not diminished although European nations have recovered from the devastation of that great war.

As a result of technological developments and political disparities, a strategic dissensus has developed within the alliance. Apprehensive of U.S. hegemony, European nations have sought ways to develop their own military deterrents. The United States, pursuing improved relations with the Soviet Union and seeking ways to end the "mad momentum" of arms development, has created doubt and anxiety regarding American commitment to Europe. The Soviet Union has contributed to the crisis of NATO by investing heavily in a military research and development program to achieve a rough parity in strategic arms with the United States.

This paper seeks to discuss some of the developments since 1960 that have contributed to the strategic dissensus in the Atlantic Community. Specific issues that will be discussed are the following:

1. the nature of the United States nuclear guarantee to western Europe, its status, and how it can be firmly reiterated;

2. the deterrent and defensive values of tactical nuclear weapons;
3. the rationale for developing independent European nuclear deterrents and what their contribution could be to the future of the NATO alliance.

FROM MASSIVE RETALIATION TO ASSURED DESTRUCTION

When the Kennedy Administration took office, it found itself confronted with a strategy for general war which emphasized a single all-out response. If nuclear war proved inevitable, the goal was to destroy the opposing society with virtually one blow. The single all-out response, or "massive-retaliation", as the doctrine was called emphasized the early use of nuclear weapons to quickly counter any Soviet thrust across the U.S. defense perimeter. The Radford Plan in 1957 had introduced this strategic doctrine to NATO, and conventional forces in Europe were deployed as a "trip Wire", an impediment to ascertain Soviet intentions and allow U.S. strategic and tactical nuclear forces time to deploy. The doctrine would have been effective in the event of general war, in the early 1960s, but the heavy reliance upon nuclear weapons limited Americas options during Cold War confrontations with the Soviet Union.¹

THE BERLIN CRISIS

The Berlin Crisis facing President Kennedy in 1961 clearly indicated the difficulties of maintaining the credibility of America's nuclear deterrent operating under this doctrine. NATO lacked the capability to wage a conventional war in Europe and was unprepared to

¹ Henry A. Kissinger, The Troubled Partnership, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 96-105.

effectively counter a major Soviet ground offensive in Berlin. President Kennedy came to realize that excessive dependence upon nuclear weapons coupled with a lack of political unity within NATO during moments of crisis could, in the Soviet perception, lessen the risks of conventional aggression in Europe.²

The Alliance was clearly divided over the Berlin situation. The French resisted continuing negotiations; the British were against risking war without continuing negotiations; the Germans were divided on their positions as their 1961 elections drew near; and the United States pursued a build up of conventional forces in Europe while continuing to negotiate with the Soviets over the issue of access rights to Berlin.³ For the Germans, the status of Berlin was but a part of the total problem of reunification. The Adenauer Government could not accept recognition of the East German government as a guarantee of access rights to Berlin, and American efforts to stabilize the worsening situation threatened West German hopes for national unity.⁴

DeGaulle created an atmosphere of quiet desperation within NATO during the Berlin crisis when he declared

² David Kannerley, President Kennedy and Britain, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972), pp. 57-59.

³ Theodore Lorenson, Kennedy, (Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), pp. 590-591.

⁴ Kannerley, pp. 62-63.

that a satisfactory solution of the German problem was impossible and that France would maintain an attitude of reserve and not participate in negotiations with the Soviets. While recognizing the Soviet position on the Oder-Neisse and accepting the division of Germany, the French sought to reassure Adenauer that they were really greater friends of Germany and far more militantly anti-communist than other allies. France's unwillingness to negotiate during this crisis situation heightened the lack of solidarity and resolve within the alliance by causing the first split communique (14 to 1) in the history of NATO.⁵

Britain, alone of America's principal allies, was reliable in her support of American policy during the crisis, but British reluctance to effectively demonstrate this support by increasing force levels in Germany, disappointed and frustrated American observers. The Macmillan Government considered that Britain's balance of payment problems and domestic political considerations made it impossible to increase British ground forces in Central Europe.⁶

The increasing promise of nuclear weapons allowed NATO in 1956 to reduce target force levels, and the American Radford Plan, formally proposed in 1957, had supported

⁵ Kunnerley, p. 62-63.

⁶ Ibid., p. 65-66.

the downgrading in importance of conventional combat and had committed America's nuclear arsenal to reduced NATO force levels. Accordingly, NATO target force levels had been reduced from ninety-six to thirty divisions, and tactical nuclear weapons had become the primary weapons of NATO armies.⁷ As a result, President Kennedy found that he could only threaten nuclear retaliation in response to possible Soviet actions over Berlin, a threat that he believed vain and inefficacious. Worse still, he felt the Soviets might perceive it the same way.⁸

THE VULNERABILITY PROBLEM

Another shortcoming of the doctrine of massive retaliation was the growing vulnerability of U.S. strategic forces as the Soviets acquired Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) during the early 1960s. U.S. strategic retaliatory forces at that time consisted primarily of some 1500 intercontinental bombers concentrated on about 60 bases around the world. With anticipated Soviet missile developments, these bases and their associated command structures would become increasingly vulnerable to a surprise Soviet missile attack. A

⁷ Kannerley, pp. 64-65.

⁸ Alain C. Enthoven and R. Jayne Smith, How Much Is Enough? (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 128-129.

successful Soviet attack against American bomber bases, soft missile sites, and control centers of the air defense system, could have destroyed most of the United States' costly strategic defensive posture before it could be deployed.⁹

In support of the doctrine of massive retaliation, the U.S. military was operating to achieve a credible first-strike capability. However, Soviet progress in missile systems was threatening to undermine the credibility of the U.S. first strike force by rendering it increasingly vulnerable to surprise attack. Several major changes in the U.S. strategic forces were undertaken in 1961 to reduce their vulnerability. The decision was made to shift from the liquid-fuel, first-generation ICBMs, Atlas and Titan to the solid-fuel Polaris and Minuteman. Minuteman could be deployed underground in silos in a high-alert status more easily than liquid-fueled missiles, and Polaris, because of its mobility and concealment, promised an extremely credible second strike capability. Procurement of B-52 bombers was stopped, and a program to phase out the large B-47 bomber force over a period of five years was undertaken.¹⁰

To decrease the vulnerability of the strategic bomber force, the number of B-52's being maintained on

⁹ Enthoven, pp. 165-168.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 168-170.

a constant 15-minute ground alert was increased from one-third to one-half the force.. An extensive program was undertaken to protect and improve command and control centers from surprise attack, merging improved communications systems into a new National Military Command System. The emphasis in research and development programs was shifted from maintaining a credible first-strike capability to developing a secure "second-strike" strategic force.. Atlas, Titan, Snark, Thor, Jupiter, Regulus, B-70, nuclear powered aircraft, Hound Dog, Skybolt and Nike Zeus programs were cancelled during the early 1960's as Soviet technological advances forced this reorientation of U.S. strategic doctrine.¹¹

The Berlin Crisis and the growing threat to U.S. strategic forces caused by Soviet advances in missile technology emphasized the need for a major reorientation of U.S. strategic doctrine during the early 1960's. Alain Enthoven and R. Wayne Smith have succinctly stated the impact of these issues in their book, How Much Is Enough?:

.....while the implications of the vulnerability problem were being assessed in DOD, the 1961 Berlin crisis took place. Whatever else this crisis may have showed, it further convinced the leaders of the Kennedy Administration that strategic nuclear forces, no matter how powerful and protected, were not by themselves an effective deterrent to all forms of aggression. These two

¹¹ Enthoven, pp. 162-172.
Brigadier A. Hunt, 1960 Without France, (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1966), pp. 90-97.

goals -- reducing the vulnerability of our strategic posture and increasing the capability of our nonnuclear forces -- provided the rationale for most of the early defense decisions.¹²

U.S. strategic objectives were reformulated as follows: (1) to deter a deliberate nuclear attack upon the United States or its allies by maintaining at all times a clear and unmistakable ability to inflict an unacceptable degree of damage upon any aggressor, even after absorbing a surprise first strike; and (2) should deterrence fail and a war occur, to limit damage to the U.S. population and industrial capability. The first of these objectives became known as "assured destruction" and the second as "damage limiting".¹³

Decisions regarding a new strategic doctrine which would permit "controlled response" or "flexible response" to Soviet aggression were neither easily nor quickly determined. One issue was the targeting of the U.S. initial strike. Strategists argued whether Soviet cities or remaining Soviet nuclear weapons should be destroyed in the initial strike.¹⁴ In the summer of 1962, Defense Secretary McNamara supported a counterforce doctrine as elaborated by his commencement speech at the University of Michigan:

¹² Anthoven, p.167.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 173-175.

¹⁴ Fred Charles Ikle, "Can Nuclear Deterrence Last Out The Century", Foreign Affairs, 51 no. 2, January 1973, p. 277.

The U.S. has come to the conclusion that to the extent feasible, basic military strategy in a possible general nuclear war should be approached in much the same way that more conventional military operations have been regarded in the past. That is to say, principal military objectives...should be the destruction of the enemy's military forces, not his civilian population.¹⁵

Throughout 1962, Secretary McNamara insisted that the United States had the capability to destroy the entire Soviet military target system even after absorbing a first blow.¹⁶

THE COUNTERVALUE OF ASSURED DESTRUCTION

By 1963, the deficiencies of a counterforce posture were becoming clear to American defense planners.

Secretary McNamara stated the problem of disarming the Soviets as follows:

Fully hard ICBM sites can be destroyed only at a great cost in terms of the numbers of offensive weapons required to dig them out. Furthermore, in a second strike situation, we would be attacking, for the most part, empty sites from which the missiles had already been fired. The value of trying to provide a capability to destroy a high proportion of Soviet hard ICBM sites becomes even more questionable in view of the expected increase in the Soviet missile-launching submarine force...¹⁷

¹⁵ Robert S. McNamara, address at the Commencement Exercises, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, June 16, 1962, Department of Defense, Office of Public Affairs, News Release no. 980-62, (June 16, 1962), p. 9.

¹⁶ Henry A. Kissinger, The Truncated Armistice, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), pp. 90-100.

¹⁷ Robert S. McNamara, Limit on Frequent and Authoritative Fiscal Hearings, Senate Armed Services Committee (80th Congress, 1st Session, 1963), p. 41.

The Secretary's statement reflected the growing awareness that the Soviets were developing a secure "second-strike" force and that a U.S. "first-strike" capability supporting a counterforce doctrine would be unattainable by the middle and late 1960's, regardless of how much the U.S. was willing to spend in an attempt to do so.¹⁸

Problems associated with missile accuracy also reduced the value of a counterforce strategy. The Polaris program was developed to guarantee that the United States would have the capability to destroy "so large a percentage of the urban population and industrial capacity of an aggressor nation that the self-destructive of a nuclear attack against the U.S. would be obvious to that nation".¹⁹ The initial three generations of Polaris missiles were counter-value weapons, lacking the accuracy needed to destroy hardened enemy missile sites or maneuverable enemy forces. Not until November 1963 was authorization given to develop a submarine launched ICBM with enhanced capability to penetrate anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems that the Soviets were expected to deploy around their major cities. In 1964, the concept of multiple individually targeted warheads (MIRVs) was proposed to

¹⁸ Anthoven, p. 170.

¹⁹ Harvey L. Sapolsky, The Polaris System Development, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 220.

significantly increase the ABM penetration capability of incoming warheads.. Combined with possible improvements in guidance systems.. MIRVs offered the potential for attacking soft city targets as well as hard military targets. In January 1965, President Johnson announced that development of a fourth generation of Polaris missiles had been undertaken and the new missile, known as Poseidon, would contain a more accurate guidance system to permit increased target flexibility.²⁰

The Minuteman system also evolved from a counter-value weapon to a system with counterforce capabilities as technological advances permitted greater warhead accuracy during the late 1960s.. During the 1969 ABM debate, Defense department officials announced that Minuteman missiles could strike within one-quarter mile of their intended target.²¹ This accuracy had been the result of several years of developments in warhead technology to increase missile accuracy to be able to strike targets with smaller warhead yields and still attain the desired overpressure to destroy the target. Decreasing the size and weight of warheads also facilitated MIRV technology as more smaller warheads could be fitted onto existing missiles.²²

²⁰ Sapolsky, pp. 220-221.

²¹ Paul Doty, "Can Investigations Improve Scientific Advice? The Case of the ABM", Minerva, 10,nr.2, April 1972, pp. 280-294.

²² Enthoven, pp. 173-184.

Returning to 1964, one finds the U.S. defense department committed a doctrine of "assured destruction". Before the House Appropriations Subcommittee in that year, Secretary McNamara made the following statement:

.....While there are still some differences of judgement on just how large a force should be, there is general agreement that it should be large enough to ensure the destruction, singly or in combination, of the Soviet Union, Communist China, and the Communist satellites as national societies, under the worst possible circumstances of war outbreak that had reasonably be postulated, and, in addition, to destroy their war-making capability so as to limit, to the extent practicable, damage to this country and to our Allies.²³

Cost-benefit analyses were undertaken to determine the most cost-effective ways to attain the capability to destroy in retaliation 20 to 25 percent of the Soviet population and 50 percent of Soviet industrial capability. Secretary McNamara after careful study and sharp debate persuaded Congress, the military, and Presidents Kennedy and Johnson that such a level of destruction would certainly represent intolerable punishment to any industrialized aggressor, and would serve as an effective deterrent against the U.S. and its allies.²⁴

The second strategic objective formulated in the early 1960s was to limit damage to the U.S. population

²³ Robert S. McNamara, Hearings Department of Defense, Appropriations for 1965, House Appropriations Subcommittee, 86th Congress, 2nd Session, 1964. part 4), pp. 27-28.

²⁴ Lenthoven, pp. 174-175.

and industrial capacity in the event deterrence failed and a war actually occurred. This was not really a new objective, for Civil Defense programs had long existed and research, development, and procurement of the Nike-Zeus interceptor missile system had been carried out by the Eisenhower Administration since 1955. President Eisenhower and Defense Secretary McNamara had agreed not to commit large sums of money on this system until its effectiveness could be demonstrated, and in 1959 President Eisenhower rejected an Army plan to procure the hardware for 120 missile batteries to protect American cities. This recommended deployment would not have been completed until 1968, and advances in missile technology could not clearly be projected in 1959.²⁵

The Kennedy-Johnson Administrations tackled the problem of damage limitation by commencing development of Nike-X in 1961, Sprint in 1963, and Spartan in 1965. The technological approach of each of these systems developed shortcomings as improvements in U.S. missiles were made and expected advancements in Soviet strategic missiles were anticipated. Defense Department cost-benefit analyses indicated that great expenses would be encountered if the U.S. tried to provide defenses against anticipated Soviet threats by the late 1960s. Secretary McNamara made this point in a statement before

²⁵ Enthoven, pp. 184-185.

the House Committee on Armed Services in 1965:

...At each successively higher level of U.S. expenditures, the ratio of our costs for Damage Limitations to the potential aggressor's costs for Assured Destruction becomes less and less favorable for us. Indeed, at the level of spending required to limit fatalities to about 40 million in a large first strike against our cities, we would have to spend on Damage Limiting programs about four times what the potential aggressor would have to spend on damage creating forces, i.e. "his" Assured Destruction forces. ←

This argument is not conclusive against our undertaking a major new Damage Limiting program. The resources available to the Soviets are more limited than our own and they may not actually react to our initiatives as we have assumed. But it does underscore the fact that beyond a certain level of defense, the cost advantage lies increasingly with the offense, and this fact must be taken into account in any decision to commit ourselves to large outlays for additional defensive measures.²⁶

DAMAGE LIMITATION ABANDONED AS A GOAL

In September 1967, Secretary McNamara strongly recommended against the deployment of an ABM system to shield against a Soviet attack, stating that such a shield would induce the Soviets to vastly increase their offensive forces, contributing to the "mad momentum" in nuclear weapons development:

Every ABM system that is now feasible involves firing defensive missiles at incoming offensive warheads in an effort

²⁶ Robert S. McNamara, "General Nuclear War: Assured Destruction and Damage Limitation", American Defense Policy, 2nd Edition, ed. Mark W. Smith and Claude J. Johns, Jr., (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 105.

to destroy them. But what many commentators on this issue overlook is that any such system can rather obviously be defeated by an enemy simply sending more offensive warheads, or dummy warheads, than there are defensive missiles capable of disposing of them.

And this is the whole crux of the nuclear action-reaction phenomenon.

Were we to deploy a heavy ABM system throughout the United States, the Soviets would clearly be strongly motivated to so increase their offensive capability as to cancel out our defensive advantage.

It is futile for each of us to spend \$4 billion, \$40 billion, or \$400 billion -- and at the end of all the spending, and at the end of all the deployment, and at the end of all the effort, to be relatively at the same point of balance on the security scale that we are now.

If we in turn hope for heavy ABM deployment -- at whatever price -- we can be certain that the Soviets will react to offset the advantage we would hope to gain.

....There is no point whatever in our responding by going to a massive ABM deployment to protect our population, when such a system would be ineffective against a sophisticated Soviet offense.²⁷

In the speech just cited, the Secretary summarized the Johnson Administration's goals for a strategic deterrent, stating that the United States' greatest deterrent against a Soviet strike was not a massive, costly, but highly penetrable ABM shield, but rather a fully credible offensive assured destruction capability. Secretary McNamara indicated that the U.S. must further expand sophisticated offensive forces to preserve the United States' overwhelming assured destruction

²⁷ Robert S. McNamara, "A Limited ABM Deployment", American Defense Policy, 2nd edition, ed. Curtis L. LeMay and James S. Connelley, Jr., (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins Press, 1962), p. 125.

capability if the Soviets elected to deploy a heavy ICBM system.²⁸

LIMITED ABM DEVELOPMENT

The Johnson Administration realized the potential of a Chinese nuclear strategic force and undertook development of a Chinese-oriented ABM system in 1967. This system was named Safeguard and was intended to provide a light and reliable ABM shield against the degree of sophistication Chinese ICBM programs were expected to demonstrate by the mid 1970s.

Secretary McNamara outlined the advantages of such an ABM deployment in his September 1967 speech to editors of United Press International:

Moreover, such an ABM deployment designed against a possible Chinese attack would have a number of other advantages. It would provide an additional indication to Asians that we intend to deter China from nuclear blackmail, and thus would contribute toward our goal of discouraging nuclear weapon proliferation among the present non-nuclear countries.

Further, the Chinese-oriented ABM deployment would enable us to add -- as a concurrent benefit -- a further defense of our Minuteman sites against Soviet attack, which means that at modest cost we would in fact be adding even greater effectiveness to our offensive missile force and avoiding a much more costly expansion of that force.

Finally, such a reasonably reliable ABM system would add protection of our population against the improbable but possible accidental launch of an intercontinental missile by any of the nuclear powers.

²⁸ McNamara, "A Limited ABM Deployment", p. 134-136.

After a detailed review of all these considerations, we have decided to go forward with this Chinese-oriented ABM deployment, and we will begin actual production of such a system at the end of this year.²⁹

In addition President Johnson strongly felt that the U.S. must develop ABM expertise to maintain a psychological equilibrium if meaningful strategic arms limitation negotiations were to be undertaken with the Soviets and ordered the Safeguard program continued. In 1969, the Nixon Administration and Congress reviewed the Safeguard ABM development program. After intense debate, the program was continued on a limited scale.³⁰ Subsequently, agreement has been reached with the Soviet Union to limit ABM development and deployment.³¹

The decision not to pursue "damage limiting" programs in the form of ABM systems evolved during the last decade in an atmosphere of intense study and debate. Very likely, the last chapter of ABM development has not yet been written. For instance, the Nixon Administration's Fiscal Year 75 budget proposals contain requests for funds to develop maneuverable re-entry vehicles (MARVs) to permit U.S. ICBMs to evade possible future Soviet defenses and to continue development surveillance systems

29 McNamara, "A Limited ABM Deployment", p. 136.

30 Doty, pp. 280-294.

31 Henry Brandon, The Retreat of American Power, (New York: Doubleday, 1973), p. 214.

to detect ICBM and SLBM launchings against the U.S..³²

In summary, U.S. strategic doctrine, as it has developed from 1960 has been built upon the foundation of a powerful, well-hedged "assured-destruction" capability -- an evolution from the notion of "massive retaliation" to a deterrence based on "assured destruction" and "damage limitation", and finally to deterrence based on "assured destruction" only. The U.S. strategic forces are designed to destroy one-fifth to one-fourth of the Soviet population and one-half of the Soviet industrial capacity, even after absorbing a full-scale surprise attack.

NATO -- A STRATEGIC DISSENSUS

Fred Charles Ikle, maintains that the evolution from "massive retaliation" to "assured destruction" has developed a contradiction between U.S. national strategic objectives and the deployment of U.S. nuclear forces within the NATO alliance. U.S. NATO nuclear forces continue to operate in accordance with a counterforce, disarming doctrine as a response to a major attack in Europe, while U.S. global deterrence posture meets the opposite requirement -- "assured destruction", a countervalue doctrine precluding a nuclear disarming

³² Michael Ryan, Disarming Doctrine: A Reply to Counterforce, National Observer, 16 February 1974, p. 6., cols. 2-6.

capability.³³ According to Ihle the United States' decision not to pursue programs of damage limitation coupled with the doctrine of "assured destruction" has been responsible for a "strategic dissensus" within the NATO alliance.

Robert Pfaltzgraff describes this dissensus within NATO, resulting from the advent of the ICBM, as follows:

Until 1957, when the Soviet Union launched its first sputnik and thus provided vivid evidence of its capacity to inflict nuclear destruction upon the United States, the U.S. military guarantee appeared to provide adequate protection to Western Europe. The advent of the intercontinental ballistic missile drastically altered the East-West strategic confrontation, European confidence in the willingness of the United States to employ nuclear weapons to defend Western Europe waned once the United States itself became vulnerable to attack by intercontinental missiles. In Europe the question was raised whether the United States would risk its own destruction in order to defend Western Europe. The very utility of alliance systems was cast into doubt, since alliance membership might commit a nation, to an extent unprecedented, to the defence of interests which could not be safeguarded without the risk of national destruction.³⁴

Western European nations have voiced considerable doubt concerning the United States' ability and willingness to commit nuclear weapons to the defense of Western Europe. Following are criticisms which can be described,

³³ Ihle, pp. 277-279.

³⁴ Pfaltzgraff, Robert L. Jr., The Atlantic Community: A Complex Imbalance, (New York: Van Nostrand, 1969), p. 33.

in part at least, by the "contradiction" analysis stated by Ikle:

1. The United States is unwilling to permit the use of either strategic or tactical nuclear weapons in the European theater because of the risk of escalation to strategic attack upon American cities. Supporting arguments generally include the increased emphasis American administrations have placed on conventional rather than nuclear weapons, the continuing pressure upon Europeans to increase force levels, the introduction of the "pause" concept envisioned by the doctrine of "flexible response", and the attention devoted to a highly centralized command and control system over nuclear weapons, virtually removing nuclear decision-making authority from local commanders.³⁵

2. The United States has consistently opposed the development of independent nuclear forces within the NATO alliance. This attitude on the part of Americans has led Europeans, especially the French, to believe that the U.S. nuclear commitment has been lessened by Soviet missile developments and that nuclear proliferation increases the chances that American cities would be destroyed

³⁵ Pfaltzgraff, p. 34.

in the event of war in Europe. Arguments supporting this belief frequently refer to the criticisms regarding European nuclear forces made by the U.S. Defense Department during the tenure of Secretary Robert McNamara. Also, the concept of the NLF is often cited as a "near disaster" in alliance planning, a complicated American proposal to permit mixed manning of naval vessels, permitting NATO governments to have a voice in the decision to use nuclear weapons. However, each nation had the authority to exercise a veto, so the use of nuclear weapons could still be controlled by the U.S..³⁶

3. U.S. plans to counter Soviet aggression in Europe are centered around the expectation that the Warsaw Pact would initially strike with conventional weapons. The U.S. has maintained this view despite indications that the Soviets would use nuclear weapons at an early stage of conflict.³⁷

4. In the event of war in Europe, the U.S. would attempt to limit war to the continent and

³⁶ Bernard Brodie, "How Not to Lead an Alliance", American Defense Policy, 2nd Edition, ed. Lark M. Smith and Claude J. Johns, Jr., (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins Press, 1963), pp. 197-201.

³⁷ Pfaltzgraff, p. 34.

might even be willing to sacrifice West European territory for the sake of avoiding a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union.. This criticism is supported by U.S. emphasis upon maintaining higher levels of conventionally equipped forces than required by the doctrine of "massive retaliation". These forces would fight a defensive war on the continent, turning Europe into a major battlefield to spare American cities from destruction.³⁸

These criticisms reflect the concern that Europeans have voiced as they have come to perceive the lessening of America's nuclear guarantee. America's willingness to commit nuclear weapons is less than automatic, and this degree of uncertainty has contributed to a strategic dissensus within NATO.

Bernard Brodie has summarized the strategic dissensus as follows:

...no one wants to see any kind of serious war breaking out in Europe, whether nuclear or non-nuclear.. But the Europeans would rather see war avoided by the threat of using nuclear weapons than take the risk which might stem from letting that threat become ambiguous. They also want to avoid the great added costs of the proposed conventional buildup for a war they consider almost impossible. Washington, on the other hand, has continued to insist that we must think not only about deterring war but about keeping it non-nuclear

³⁸ Pfaltzgraff, p. 37-38.
Brodie, pp. 197-201.

if it comes.³⁹

THE AMBIGUITY ASPECT OF THE U.S. NUCLEAR DEFERENT

The threat of using nuclear weapons has become ambiguous. By design, the U.S. has made the threat ambiguous. America maintains a "triad" of nuclear delivery systems to maximize difficulty for Soviet defense planning. More important, by not stating precise circumstances under which the U.S. would resort to using nuclear weapons, U.S. Defense officials feel that the Soviets would be forced to face greater risks and uncertainties when trying to anticipate America's reaction to military moves they may be considering. Enthoven and Smith, when discussing the role of nuclear weapons in their book, How Much Is enough, stated the following:

To point out the limited role of U.S. strategic nuclear forces is not to say that they did not have an important relationship to NATO. They obviously did. In view of our U.S. visible political and military commitment to NATO, the Soviets could never be sure that the United States would not use strategic nuclear forces in the event of an attack on Europe, even at the risk of a Soviet attack on the United States. In this sense, nuclear weapons were obviously important in helping to deter aggression -- even aggression limited to the European theater.⁴⁰

These authors were writing of defense decisions

³⁹ Brodie, p. 201.

⁴⁰ Enthoven, pp. 123-124.

made during the Kennedy-Johnson administrations, but the Nixon Administration has continued and expanded a policy of ambiguity regarding nuclear weapons in support of the Nixon Doctrine.⁴¹ President Nixon has argued for the flexibility of carrying out a limited nuclear response to provide alternatives appropriate to the nature and level of the provocation. In his 1971 Foreign Policy Message, President Nixon reiterated his view of the importance of this option. "I must not be -- and my successors must not be -- limited to the indiscriminate mass destruction of enemy civilians as the sole possible response to challenges. This is especially so when that response involves the likelihood of triggering nuclear attacks on our own population." The President concluded that "we must insure that we have the forces and procedures that provide us with alternatives appropriate to the nature and level of the provocation."⁴²

President Nixon and Defense Secretary James Schlesinger have sought to develop an option of limited response against the possibility of limited attack. Technological advancements in Soviet missile systems

⁴¹President Nixon's address, "A Redefinition of the United States Role in the World", U.S. Foreign Policy 1971, (Dept. of State Publication, March, 1972), pp. 421-429.

⁴²Charles L. Schultze, Edward A. Fried, Alice M. Rivlin, Nancy H. Teeters, Setting National Priorities: The 1972 Budget, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1971).

could give them the capability to attack with part of their missile force, destroying some U.S. strategic forces, holding in reserve a substantial follow-on nuclear attack capability to threaten U.S. cities. If the Soviets actually attacked U.S. strategic forces, then the U.S., operating under the doctrine of "assured destruction", would have the option of attacking Soviet cities and receiving attacks upon U.S. cities in retaliation, or of resorting to action below the threshold of nuclear weapons. The Nixon Administration does not desire U.S. nuclear forces to become impotent in such a scenario.⁴³

The Soviet Union is allowed to pursue qualitative improvements in nuclear strategic systems in accordance with the 1972 Strategic Arms Limitations Agreement. Such improvements as MIRVed warheads could destabilize the arms race if they become too accurate. They then provide a counterforce capability with a first-strike threat.⁴⁴ To protect against this possible Soviet development, the Nixon Administration has moved towards developing a counterforce, first-strike nuclear posture for the U.S..

The Fiscal Year 1975 defense budget contains three new counterforce-related requests already mentioned in

⁴³ Schultze, pp. 44-46.
-gan, p. 6., cols. 2-6.

⁴⁴ Brandon, pp. 303-305.

this paper: \$85 million for improving the accuracy of warheads, \$25 million for work on a land based missile with greater explosive power than present U.S. missiles, and \$82 million to develop MARV's, improving the evasive capabilities of missiles.

The present administration's arguments to develop a limited response option to the "assured destruction" doctrine are not accepted by all critics of U.S. strategic doctrine. Some argue that such a Soviet attack is inconceivable. The reasoning is that the Soviets would recognize from the outset that a counterforce attack limited to missile sites, communications or control centers, or other military installations would cause so much damage that it would be difficult to distinguish from an attack on civilian population centers and would inevitably lead to catastrophic general nuclear war. In addition, critics contend that measures to increase missile accuracy would further destabilize the strategic arms race because the Soviets could interpret such developments as moves towards a first-strike capability and would be forced to increase their own development programs to off-set perceived American advances. Such measures would run counter to the objective of mutual stability and defeat strategic arms limitations negotiations. Also, the development of a new counterforce, limited response option, has been opposed simply because it suggests that strategic war could be fought without

large-scale destruction and thereby increases the danger of general war.⁴⁵ The development of a limited response option is one of the strategic issues that U.S. leaders will debate during the years ahead.

THE STRATEGIC CONTRADICTION AND THE U.S. NUCLEAR GUARANTEE

If such an option is developed, and it appears, at present, that the necessary technological advances will be undertaken, this provision for a counterforce doctrine could reconcile the contradiction that has developed between U.S. global strategic posture and U.S. supported NATO doctrine. If one accepts the argument that limited nuclear exchanges need not escalate to retaliatory attacks on Soviet and U.S. cities, then both NATO and U.S. strategic doctrine can be reconciled to support counterforce doctrine.

Would such a conciliation enable the United States to firmly reiterate a nuclear guarantee to Western Europe? I believe it would not. The issue of damage limitation and the risk of escalation to strategic counter-city exchanges will not have been resolved by a new counterforce option to the U.S. strategic deterrent. American cities will still remain vulnerable, and the rationality of man's actions once nuclear weapons have been introduced to a conflict situation must still remain

⁴⁵ Schultze, pp. 42-43.
Egan, p. 6.

in question. The United States can firmly reiterate its nuclear guarantee to Western Europe only by demonstrating that the survival of that area remains vital to U.S. security. The U.S. must translate into deeds these words spoken by President Nixon in an address to the American people on February 25, 1971:

Our U.S. ties with Western Europe are central to the structure of peace because its nations are rich in tradition and experience, strong economically, vigorous in diplomacy and culture; they are in a position to take a major part in building a world of peace.

....Looking ahead in Europe:

We shall cooperate in our political and economic relations across the Atlantic as the Common Market grows.

We and our allies will make the improvements necessary to carry out our common defense strategy.

Together we stand ready to reduce our forces in Western Europe in exchange for mutual reductions in Eastern Europe.⁴⁶

THE WEAKENING OF AMERICA'S NATO COMMITMENT

The U.S. has been plagued by a foreign policy credibility gap since the Kennedy Administration, and this gap, more than any contradiction between national strategic deterrent policy and NATO defense policy, has intensified doubts concerning the United States' commitment to provide support to allied nations. Events have occurred which may have weakened U.S. resolve or, at least, appeared to have weakened America's will in the

⁴⁶ President Nixon's address, pp. 421-426.

eyes of Europeans. The Kennedy Administration seemed to have difficulty grasping the extent of the limitations as well as the extent of its power. The Bay of Pigs fiasco demonstrated to Europeans that President Kennedy was not in full command of his Administration. This ill-fated venture has been described as President Kennedy's greatest blunder in foreign affairs.⁴⁷ In addition, the Kennedy Administration engineered the Skybolt Crisis, and intensified America's involvement in Viet Nam. This involvement, intensified further by Presidents Johnson and Nixon during the following decade, has been the most important single element in the tragic estrangement between the U.S. and its European allies. The miscalculations in that war has torn into the American society and has created doubt in Europeans that the U.S. will defend Europe in all circumstances. Franz Josef Strauss, in his book Challenge and Response, reprinted an article by Lothar Kuehl in Die Welt, April 4, 1967, which foresaw the consequences to Europe of America's involvement in Vietnam:

The idea that America is certain to defend Europe in all circumstances, even in the absence of an adequate European effort, is false. Clearly, this notion has now in any case been shaken. Europe can trust America only so long as the European nations show themselves more worthy of trust and confidence than South Vietnam. Europe cannot afford to trust America blindly and cannot leave the burden and responsibility of protecting its

⁴⁷ Turnerley, pp. 148-149.

nations exclusively to whoever happens to be President of the USA.

....ie. the statesmen who were in office at the time of the alliance's greatest era -- have again and again tried to impress upon Europeans, to wit that nothing in this world can be had free of charge and that America can and will only help those who are prepared to help themselves.⁴⁸

What the future holds is uncertain, but Europeans and Americans alike are aware of the changed atmosphere-- the loss of confidence in America's ability and desire to effectively lead the NATO Alliance. In 1961, President Kennedy promised in his Inaugural Address:

...Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.⁴⁹

In the space of just ten years that dedicated, magnificent rhetoric, mired down by overinvolvement in Vietnam, has been supplanted by the Nixon Doctrine:

The world has changed. Our U.S. foreign policy must change with it.

We have learned in recent years the dangers of overinvolvement. The other danger -- a grave risk we are equally determined to avoid -- is underinvolvement. After a long and unpopular war, there is temptation to turn inward -- to withdraw from the world, to back away from our commitments. That deceptively smooth road of the new isolationism is surely the road to war.

Our foreign policy today steers a steady course between the past danger of overinvolvement

⁴⁸ Franz Josef Strauss, Challenge and Response, (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Ltd., 1967), pp.148-149.

⁴⁹ Lunnery, p. 229.

and the new temptation of underinvolvement.

That policy, which I first enunciated in Guam 19 months ago, represents our basic approach to the world:

-----We will maintain our commitments, but we will make sure our own troop levels or any financial support to other nations is appropriate to current threats and needs.

-----We shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.

-----But we will look to threatened countries and their neighbors to assume primary responsibility for their own defense, and we will provide support where our interests call for that support and where it can make a difference.

These principles are not limited to security matters.⁵⁰

LESSONS FROM THE BERLIN CRISIS

The Berlin Crisis of 1961 illustrates two points.

First, the crisis illustrated that U.S. resolve to use nuclear weapons to defend Western Europe was not increased by a lack of contradiction between U.S. global strategic doctrine and NATO nuclear doctrine. All U.S. deterrent forces at that time operated under the doctrine of "massive retaliation". In addition, the U.S. was not exposed to the danger of devastation in the event of war in 1961. Soviet strategic forces were not adequate for the task.⁵¹

Second, the U.S. did not give in to Soviet demands, nor did Khrushchev push the crisis to the point at which

⁵⁰ President Nixon's address, pp. 422-423.

⁵¹ Strauss, p. 144.

no option remained other than nuclear war because he realized that the American people were willing to fight for Berlin. Berlin was the touchstone to American honor, an essential foundation in the structure of the Atlantic Community, and the American people overwhelmingly supported the rights of the city.⁵² American soldiers stationed in Europe and supported by an aroused American public, not the doctrine of U.S. strategic forces, represented the resolve of the American people.

SUMMARY

The sovereign nations comprising the Atlantic Community have not always agreed on major issues. Differences in perspective should not be surprising nor should such differences be allowed to become threatening to any NATO nation's security or national self-interest. Much has been accomplished during the past decade by effective negotiations within the Community. The Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, the "Kennedy Round" of trade negotiations, and the "Smithsonian Accord" to realign exchange rates are just a few examples of accord reached on vital issues of mutual interest. In the years ahead, Americans must convince Europeans and themselves as well that the survival of Europe indeed remains vital to U.S. security

⁵² Munnerley, pp. 57-62.

and continue to conduct effective consultation in areas of mutual concern. To fail to do so, will signal a lessening in importance of Europe to America and will continue to undermine the credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee to Europe.

ROLES OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Tactical nuclear weapons have a controversial history. In NATO, two roles for these weapons have been distinguished:

1. to deter the use of similar weapons by Soviet forces, and
2. to deter a Soviet attack with conventional weapons and to counter such an attack should it occur.¹

It is generally agreed that tactical nuclear weapons in the hands of NATO forces in Europe provide considerable deterrent value against Soviet use of tactical nuclear weapons and a reasonably credible deterrent against Soviet conventional attack. This is true not only because the tactical weapons themselves can inflict high costs on an enemy's forces, but also because their use, or an enemy's pre-emptive strike against them would sharply raise the probability that the war would escalate to all-out dimensions.² Halberstam in The Best and the Brightest stated the problem of escalation most succinctly:

...in the Pentagon's war games there always seemed to be a problem with the tactical

¹ Schultz, p. 94-95.

² Glenn H. Snyder, "Deterrence and Defense: A Theoretical Introduction", American Defense Policy, 2nd. Edition, ed. Mark A. Smith and Claude J. Johns, Jr., (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 35.

Schultz, pp. 94-95.

nuclear weapons. No matter which side fired first, the other side would retaliate, and everytime without fail it would somehow expand to strategic weapons; whoever was behind on the little stuff would let fly with the big stuff.³

As a supplement to conventional forces, tactical nuclear weapons can contribute to deterrence by adding uncertainty to an enemy's plans for aggression. The crucial and controversial question is to what extent NATO should rely on tactical nuclear weapons as an alternative to conventional forces for deterrence and defense in Europe.⁴

THE RADFORD PLAN

The Radford Plan, submitted to NATO in 1957, placed reliance for Western European defense primarily upon tactical and strategic nuclear weapons. Under the Radford Plan, NATO conventional forces were a "trip-wire", an impediment to ascertain Soviet intentions and allow U.S. strategic and tactical nuclear forces time to deploy. Conventional forces were a "shield" of immense psychological value intended to support the U.S. nuclear "sword" of "massive retaliation".⁵ The Radford Plan was appealing to Europeans and Americans for several

³ David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest, (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1972), pp. 297-298.

⁴ Schultze, p. 94.

⁵ Missinger, The Troubled Partnership, pp. 21-35.

reasons. The possibilities of nuclear weapons permitted NATO to reduce force level requirements from ninety-six to thirty divisions. Thirty divisions was a much more credible requirement, because actual NATO force levels had never come close to ninety-six divisions, the number determined in 1954 as necessary for "forward strategy" to defend Germany as far to the east as possible. The Radford Plan offered a "forward strategy" with force levels that could be maintained by NATO nations.⁶

TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS AS A VIABLE OPTION

During the late 1950's and early 1960's, it had become clear that strategic nuclear forces were an ineffective form of power in local conflict and could not deter local wars. They had not prevented Communists from conducting guerrilla actions or from using open force in Korea and Southeast Asia. In crisis after crisis, it had become clear that the U.S. was not willing to invoke "massive retaliation". It was not a credible response except in the most extreme circumstance -- direct Soviet -- U.S. confrontation. Tactical nuclear weapons were thought to provide a viable option short of "massive retaliation".⁷

⁶ Nunnerley, p. 65.

⁷ Anthoven, p. 123.

Charles J. Hitch, and Roland W. Niekman, The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age, (New York: Atheneum, 1973), pp. 350-352.

The deterrent value of tactical nuclear weapons was great in the late 1950's, and remains so today, and it was generally believed that the controlled use of small-yield nuclear weapons against strictly military targets could keep collateral damage low.⁸ Also, tactical nuclear weapons provided an alternative to the holocaust-or-humiliation dilemma of strategic nuclear weapons.

QUESTIONING THE ASSUMPTIONS SUPPORTING TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The assumptions underlying these supposed advantages offered by tactical nuclear weapons were subject to debate. Charles J. Hitch and Roland N. McKean in The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age, questioned the soundness of using tactical nuclear weapons, and stated that some of the proposals for using these weapons were quite reckless. First, they rejected the notion that nuclear weapons favor the defender rather than the aggressor and that NATO could depend on them to compensate for men and conventional arms. The West lacked a monopoly on these weapons, even as early as 1960 when their work was published, and no convincing evidence had indicated that tactical nuclear weapons favored the defender rather than the aggressor if both sides used such weapons. Their analysis revealed the following defects in NATO force level assumptions:

⁸ Anthoven, p. 125-126.

The argument runs that the offense requires concentration and so the aggressor necessarily provides the defender with a lucrative atomic target. This ignores the fact that, in a delivered nuclear weapon itself, the offense has an enormous concentration of force. The use of nuclear weapons in limited wars might make it possible for the aggressor to eliminate the existing forces of the defender and to get the war over, reaching his limited objective before the defender or his allies can mobilize new forces. Like all-out nuclear war, it puts a premium on surprise and forces in being rather than on mobilization potential, which is the area in which the West has an advantage.⁹

Hitch and McKean further questioned the assumption that limited nuclear warfare could be limited to the immediate area of battle:

Nuclear limited war, simply because of the extreme swiftness and unpredictability of its moves, the necessity of delegating authority to local commanders and the possibility of sharp and sudden desperate reversals of fortune, would put the greatest strain on the deterrent to all-out thermonuclear war.

For this reason we believe that it would be appropriate to emphasize the importance of expanding a conventional capability realistically, and in particular, research and development in non-nuclear modes of warfare.¹⁰

These statements summarized Hitch and McKean's findings from their RAND Corporation research study of defense issues during the late 1950's. Charles Hitch, in 1961, became Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) in the U.S. Department of Defense. His views were shared by Defense Secretary McNamara, Assistant Secretary

⁹ Hitch, pp. 351-352.

¹⁰ Hitch, p. 352.

Enthoven, and President Kennedy. Secretary McNamara thus "set out to harness the night, to control it, and to bring some order and rationality to it, and soon, above all, to limit the use of nuclear weapons".¹¹

One of the McNamara team's major efforts, development of a secure second-strike capability, discussed earlier in this paper, was not of particular concern to Europeans. Despite intense inter-service debate in the U.S., American nuclear weapons continued to protect NATO nations. As the doctrine of "assured destruction" developed during the decade, a contradiction developed between U.S. national strategic doctrine and NATO policies, but this contradiction was not immediately discernable, and Europeans did not seriously object to this U.S. defense shift in emphasis in the early 1960's. Indeed, the Europeans and Americans, in general, were impressed by the McNamara "cost-effectiveness" analysis, various gaming techniques, the use of operations analysis and the supposed dependence on new computer systems.¹²

Projects undertaken to strengthen and protect command and communications facilities from Soviet attack were seen as desirable, but when controls and safeguards were placed on tactical nuclear weapons to prevent accidental or unauthorized launching, both the U.S. military and European leaders voice dissatisfaction. To

¹¹ Halberstam, p. 297.

¹² Brodie, p. 196.

the U.S. military, this meant downgrading of the field commander, not trusting his professional judgement as a senior military officer. In theory, the decision to use nuclear weapons was always the President's, but in practice, senior U.S. military officers felt that they could make the decision to use the weapons based on their judgement in the event that communications failed.¹³

European apprehensions were raised by the centralization of command and control in the hands of the U.S. President. This move underscored the dependence of NATO allies upon major decisions taken in Washington. This development was especially threatening because of Soviet advances in missile technology. In 1957, the Soviet Union had launched Sputnik I and clearly demonstrated a growing Soviet capacity to inflict nuclear destruction upon the United States. European confidence in the willingness of the United States to employ nuclear weapons of any kind to defend Europe was on the wane as the United States had become increasingly vulnerable to Soviet nuclear attack. Tightening command and control was perceived by Europeans as a lessening of America's desire to allow the use of nuclear weapons in Europe.¹⁴

CONVENTIONAL FORCE BUILD-UP

While U.S. strategic forces were being reoriented,

¹³ Halberstam, p. 297.

¹⁴ Pfaltzgraff, p. 33.
Missinger, The Troubled Partnership, pp. 109-111.

and McNamara's "Whiz Kids" were rethinking the role of tactical nuclear weapons, the Berlin Crisis of 1961 took place. This crisis underscored the necessity of having strong conventional forces to support a nuclear deterrent. The Kennedy Administration immediately began to build-up American conventional forces and pressed NATO allies to increase their own force levels.

Secretary McNamara outlined the necessity for increasing allied conventional force levels to enhance the credibility of the U.S. nuclear arsenal in two major speeches during 1962. He spoke before the NATO delegates in Athens and again stressed the importance of conventional forces at the Commencement Exercises in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The following is from his Ann Arbor speech:

If we have shown ourselves able and ready to engage in large scale non-nuclear warfare in response to a Communist provocation, the Soviets can hardly misconstrue two things: first, that we regard provocation as a challenge to our vital interests; and second, that we will use nuclear weapons to prevail, if this becomes necessary.¹⁵

The positive case for a major conventional option was straightforward to the Kennedy Administration. First, conventional forces could counter Soviet aggression or threats of aggression without the strain on the unity of the alliance that using nuclear weapons would entail. Such a capability offered an alternative to "suicide or surrender" and would underpin diplomatic action in

¹⁵ McNamara, Commencement address, p. 9.

peacetime and support firm resistance in crisis. In addition, a major conventional option could provide the kind of military diversification to facilitate actions to halt the spread of nuclear weapons.¹⁶

Also, it was argued that conventional weapons cause far less collateral than nuclear weapons. From past experience, it was known that favorable military results could be achieved using conventional forces, but tactical nuclear weapons represented entry into an unknown area of major uncertainty. Of equal importance, the risks of escalation to general nuclear war appeared substantially smaller in conventional battles than in tactical nuclear conflict. Moreover, the McNamara team felt that a conventional option in NATO would reduce the premium on the American nuclear guarantee.¹⁷

Despite the deficiencies of tactical nuclear weapons, the United States did not advocate their removal from NATO. The Kennedy-Johnson Administrations maintained that these weapons did have an important, if limited, role and complimented a strong conventional capability. U.S. Defense Department studies during the early 1960's suggested four reasons for retaining a nuclear option:

1. Tactical nuclear weapons were already stockpiled in Europe. To remove them would have raised the specter of an imminent U.S.

¹⁶ Anthoven, p. 130.

¹⁷ Anthoven, p. 130.

withdrawal from Europe. Therefore, maintaining the presence of these weapons helped reassure the allies of U.S. will to use whatever weapons were necessary for their defense.

2. Tactical nuclear weapons contributed to the deterrence of conventional as well as nuclear aggression. They placed inhibitions on the enemy and forced him to face the prospect that initiation of a conventional conflict might prompt a nuclear response. If he massed his forces for a conventional attack, as was probable, it would be exactly the wrong deployment to receive a nuclear strike.

3. Tactical nuclear weapons would deter a first use of tactical nuclear weapons by the Soviets. Without such a capability, the Soviets might be tempted to launch pre-emptive nuclear strikes against NATO forces. With tactical nuclear weapons the U.S. could credibly threaten extensive damage to Soviet forces in retaliation.

4. Finally, tactical nuclear weapons represented a hedge against the possible failure in other parts of the NATO force posture. If conventional forces failed,

tactical nuclear weapons could then be used to halt Soviet aggression.¹⁸

THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE

General Maxwell Taylor, in The Uncertain Future, had in 1960 specified what the role of conventional forces should be in a credible military program. He stated that the U.S. must have counter-attrition forces capable of extending the scope of potential military action across the entire spectrum of possible challenge in accordance with a strategy of "Flexible Response". In his view, U.S. conventional forces in Europe had an important role in both general and limited warfare. In general war, they would hold the enemy at arms length while heavy weapons were maneuvered into battle. In other words, sizeable conventional forces were necessary to force the enemy to concentrate his forces making him extremely vulnerable to conventional or nuclear attack. Also, defensive forces must have enough residual strength to regain lost territory or occupy enemy lands and claim a victory. For a limited war, conventional forces must be strong enough to turn back infiltrations, raids, and border forays to gain the time to discern an enemy's intentions.

In addition to purely military considerations,

¹⁸ Anthoven, pp. 128-130.

General Taylor recognized that U. S. forces deployed in Europe performed a very important psychological role. They exemplified American willingness to share the hazards of living within gunshot of the Communists. These forces represented America's will to uphold U.S. security commitments. General Taylor argued that U.S. conventional forces must have the equipment, supplies, and munitions necessary for six months of combat. Thereafter expanded war production would begin to take over the burden.¹⁹

THE EVOLUTION OF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

The Kennedy Administration borrowed heavily from General Taylor's arguments to develop a new strategic doctrine to provide for greater flexibility than had the strategy of "massive retaliation". Initially the new strategy of "flexible response" provided for a conventional defense against a conventional Soviet attack in Europe. NATO forces were to be sufficiently equipped for ninety days combat to allow reserve forces time to deploy and to allow for expanded war production. In the event of Soviet attack, NATO and Warsaw Pact nations, would be allowed the opportunity to re-evaluate their actions before nuclear arms were committed to battle. Conceivably, a Soviet attack would be halted with NATO conventional forces, but if conventional forces failed,

¹⁹ General Maxwell D. Taylor, The Uncertain Armistice, (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 13-140.

nuclear weapons would be used.²⁰

Thus, tactical nuclear weapons were assigned three basic roles: one, they served primarily to contribute to the deterrence of Soviet aggression; two, they were to avert the first use of similar weapons by Soviet forces; and three, they were a hedge in case national defense failed. A distinctive "firebreak" between conventional and nuclear phases of combat was established as a safeguard to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, an act that could escalate to general nuclear war.²¹

The new doctrine represented sudden and drastic changes in American strategic thinking in less than five years and cast question on U.S. steadiness and judgement.²² Also, the sudden switch embarrassed European military and political leaders who had supported the doctrine of massive retaliation. President Kennedy contributed further to European fears and suspicions when, in 1963, he relieved General Horstad as SACEUR. This action was done without prior consultations with NATO allies, and was unsettling to allied governments who considered SACEUR an allied post, subordinate equally to all the governments whose forces were under his command. Horstad had questioned the soundness of "flexible response"

20 Pfaltzgraff, pp. 33-36.
Brooks, pp. 196-199.
Antlovén, pp. 124-132.

21 Kissinger, The Troubled Partnership, pp. 117-119.

22 Hunt, pp. 96-97.

and had gained the respect of European leaders for his unreadiness to accept the doctrine. His replacement, General Lyman Lemnitzer, came to the post with a kind of stigma that could do him or the Kennedy Administration no good. He had been Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time of the Bay of Pigs and had added his consent to that incredible operation. His arrival in Europe fanned speculation that Kennedy wanted him out of Washington and signalled that the post of SACEUR was of lessened importance.²³

Many specific criticisms were raised against the new doctrine. First, it was inconceivable to many, that the Soviets would attack with conventional and not nuclear weapons. Analysis of Soviet military strategy indicated that the Soviets consistently stressed the desirability to strike quickly with nuclear weapons to depress enemy troops morally, lower their combat ability, upset command, and quickly create conditions for completing the enemy's defeat.²⁴ Charles Hitch and Roland N. McKean in 1960 had argued the following in The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age:

We are inclined to believe that most of those who rely on tactical nuclear weapons as a substitute for disparities in conventional forces have in general presupposed a cooperative Soviet attacker, one who did not use atomic weapons himself. Here again is an instance of Western preferred Soviet strategies, this time applied to limited war.²⁵

²³ Brodie, pp. 198-199.

²⁴ V.D. Sokolovski, Soviet Military Strategy, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963), Chapter 4.

Trevor Cliffe, Military Technology and the European Balance, Adelphi Papers, nr.89, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1972), pp. 35-37.

Thus, in 1960, Hitch argued that NATO must increase conventional force levels to counter a Soviet nuclear attack. Two years later, as an important member of the U.S. Defense Department he was arguing that NATO must increase conventional force levels to counter Soviet attack with conventional forces. The reasoning behind the complete reversal of his viewpoint was not clear or acceptable to everyone.

The McNamara Defense Department stressed that tactical nuclear weapons provided such an effective deterrent that the Soviets would not attack with similar weapons. Still, critics argued that by delaying the introduction of nuclear weapons until NATO forces were on the verge of collapse, the doctrine of "flexible response" actually undermined any deterrent value that these weapons might have. Henry Kissinger, among others argued that the use of nuclear weapons when on the verge of defeat would probably not induce the Soviets to stop fighting. Rather, it would signal that NATO forces were on the verge of collapse and would cause Soviet forces to intensify their efforts. Worse conditions could not be imagined for transmission of nuclear release orders to the battle zone. Forces on the verge of defeat would hardly be able to maintain communications or gather intelligence concerning enemy troop dispositions to be able to use tactical nuclear weapons.²⁶

²⁵ Hitch, p. 352.

²⁶ Hunt, pp. 22-24.

Kissinger, The Troubled Partnership, pp. 113-114.

The doctrine of "flexible response" appeared to be a means to limiting war to the European continent. U.S. attempts to raise the threshold of nuclear action threatened to turn Europe into a major battlefield for the third time this century. Europeans visualized a European continent overrun by conventional forces and finally destroyed by nuclear weapons.²⁷ The issue of collateral damage has always been central to Europeans, especially to the Germans who share a border with the Soviet Bloc in Central Europe. German efforts had been primarily instrumental in persuading the alliance to accept the forward strategy in 1954 to prevent Germany from being overrun while NATO forces were developing to their potential. Again, in 1962, Germany proposed a short conventional defense with a low nuclear threshold to ascertain Soviet intentions. Almost immediately, tactical nuclear weapons would be used in the conflict zone. Assuming that the Soviets did not first launch a preemptive disarming strike, nuclear holocaust would be limited to the border area.²⁸

The Kennedy Administration countered with the argument that collateral damage from conventional weapons would be far less than fall out and immediate damage from

²⁷ Wynfred Joshua, Nuclear Weapons and the Atlantic Alliance, (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1973), pp. 32-34.

²⁸ Hunt, pp. 25-44.

nuclear weapons.

France opposed vigorously the buildup of conventional forces, arguing that "flexible response" embodied many of the features of military strategy of previous wars. The massing of conventional armies was not appropriate because it exposed such armies to nuclear attack. In the view of General Molleret, the presence of large scale armies, together with the American strategic doctrine of "flexible response" might not deter, but might have tempted a Soviet strike against Western Europe in the expectation of winning a non-nuclear victory. The French, like the Germans, thought that tactical nuclear weapons were a credible deterrent only if they would be used without delay in response to a Soviet thrust westward.²⁹

The argument frequently cited to counter this position has been that sufficient levels of conventional forces are necessary to force an enemy to concentrate his forces and make him vulnerable to nuclear attack.³⁰

The Disagreement concerning conventional forces and tactical nuclear weapons continued without resolve until 1967 when the NATO Committee for Defense Planning adopted a compromise strategy based on a three step "flexible response". This doctrine which is still in effect today, provides for a first stage of direct defense -- mainly by

²⁹ Pfaltzgraff, p. 38.
Joshua, p. 40.

³⁰ Enthoven, pp. 128-130.

using conventional forces. Should this fail, the second stage -- that of deliberate escalation -- would follow. This phase, would consist of the use of nuclear weapons for selective strikes against enemy forces and targets within tactical range behind the enemy front. Should none of this produce the desired effect, strategic strikes against the Soviet Union could be ordered. These three phases will not be treated as strictly separate in terms of time and space, but each stage may have some of the characteristics of the other two.³¹

The actual agreement on the three step doctrine is less interesting than the conditions that facilitated the agreement. Robert Pfaltzgraff, representing an American viewpoint, states that the withdrawal of France from the NATO integrated command enabled the remaining members to reach at least a formal level of strategic consensus.³² Franz Josef Strauss, West German Defense Minister at the time of the agreement, views the situation somewhat differently. He states that the ambivalence of American policy --- from deterrence to relaxation -- facilitated the agreement. In his view, the U.S. supported this revision of doctrine as a carefully graduated concession, a "good example" to allow trust to grow in the Soviet Union. This action, along with reductions in U.S. troop levels in Germany

³¹ Strauss, pp. 50-53.

³² Pfaltzgraff, p. 42.

which also occurred in 1967, was a signal that America was ready to join in a gradual disengagement and progressive denuclearization.³³

Strauss' view strikes at the heart of much of Europe's criticism of American nuclear doctrine. The argument proceeds that the U.S. desires to raise the nuclear threshold because of the increasing vulnerability of American cities to Soviet strategic attack. The strategy of "flexible response" is a doctrine of controlled warfare betraying signs of "Vietnamization" designed to keep conflict below the nuclear threshold to enable the U.S. to pursue Kissinger-style diplomatic negotiations with the Soviet Union.

In this scenario, it is open to question whether, the U.S. would make available the tactical nuclear weapons stationed in Europe, and even more doubtful that the U.S. would launch strategic weapons. To Strauss, the U.S. views NATO as an "arms control" device and has tried to maintain close control over nuclear weapons for the past decade. As support for these arguments, Strauss cites the realities of the Soviet's growing missile technology, the vigor with which the U.S. pursued the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and Non-Proliferation Treaty, and various devices which the U.S. pursued to keep control of nuclear weapons from Europeans, ie. MLF and sharp criticism of

33 Strauss, pp. 49-51.

independent European nuclear forces. Strauss fears that the centralization of nuclear command and control in the office of the President of the United States, coupled with U.S. desires to avoid nuclear warfare, has undermined the credibility of the U.S. strategic and tactical deterrent. The European fear is that the superpowers will negotiate an "understanding" regarding central Europe's future (German concern for reunification) that will leave Europeans subject to superpower dictates. Thus, European nations who are concerned about sovereignty would lose their ability to control their future.³⁴

This sort of reasoning based on misperceptions and partial truths is being reinforced by American actions. U.S. Senator Henry Jackson has deplored the lack of effective consultation within the Atlantic Community. He has criticized U.S. handling of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks with the Soviet Union, stating that U.S. arms control policies are based upon a concept that would limit U.S. strategic forces to retaliate only in the event of a direct attack upon the United States. That may be an overstatement, but Senator Jackson argues that such a belief has been reinforced by the lack of consultation with NATO allies prior to the negotiations. He doubts that the U.S. practice of briefing NATO allies after each stage of the negotiations effectively assuages

³⁴ Strauss, Chapters 4 and 10.

European fears of a U.S.-Soviet deal or U.S. withdrawal from Europe.³⁵

SUMMARY -- THE DISSENSUS TODAY

The dissensus surrounding the use of tactical nuclear weapons stems from two related issues. First, disagreement among allies exists regarding how much value should be placed on the deterrent and defensive capabilities of these weapons. European arguments during the last decade stressed the need for limiting collateral damage and for developing a forward strategy to defend West Germany as far to the East as possible, and tactical nuclear weapons were seen as substitutes for conventional forces. Myths about the Red Army's size and capability stressed the futility of NATO's attempting to meet the Soviets with conventional weapons. The McNamara Defense Department conducted extensive studies during the early 1960's to ascertain true Soviet force levels and capabilities but attempts to persuade West Europeans that NATO could and should place greater emphasis on conventional weapons failed.³⁶

Today, the dissensus of tactical nuclear weapons seems to be based upon another myth involving the Soviet Union's intentions in Western Europe. Western Europe

³⁵ "Senator Jackson Reviews Lessons of SALT One", Aviation Week and Space Technology, 11 Dec. 1972, pp. 53-55.

³⁶ see Enthoven, especially chapter 4.

perceives an overt Soviet military threat as extremely low.³⁷ Indeed, no one seriously thinks that the Soviets would invade Western Europe. Reasons forwarded for this perception are that the Soviets will not risk direct confrontation with the U.S., are experiencing severe domestic technological and agricultural difficulties and are deeply concerned about possible hostilities with the Chinese.

This perception is reinforced by force reduction negotiations with the Warsaw Pact, increased trade negotiations with Eastern Europe, and increasing public statements by Western leaders to the effect that "the danger of global conflict has diminished".³⁸ The greater contacts between East and West have weakened the solidarity of the Western Alliance, and as has been discussed, America's lack of consultation with NATO partners before pursuing bilateral negotiations with the Soviets has probably contributed to European sentiments that America is abandoning her commitment to defend Europe. West European nations have also conducted bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union and East European nations. France, under DeGaulle, pursued better relations with the Soviet Union and, more recently, West Germany has become the first NATO nation to sign a

³⁷ Pfaltzgraff, p. 59.

³⁸ Henry A. Kissinger, "Pacem in Terris Address", Pacem in Terris Conference, Oct. 8, 1973, Sheraton-Park Hotel, Washington, D.C..

non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union.

One of the provisions of the 1970 Treaty of Moscow negotiated by the Soviet Union and West Germany was the renunciation of the use of military force in Central Europe. This has contributed to an antinuclear bias in the West German Social Democratic and the Free Democratic parties who consider it politically expedient to avoid public discussions of nuclear warfare. The Brandt Administration has played down the role of nuclear weapons in an eagerness to project a more acceptable West German image to the East. Ostpolitik and Detente have heightened the dissensus surrounding the use of tactical nuclear weapons as NATO nations attempt to develop a defense and deterrent posture commensurate with the diminishing Soviet military threat in Europe but one that does not present an overeagerness to rely on nuclear weapons to an extent that might damage the present, fragile detente with the Soviet Union.

The second root of dissensus concerns the reliability of America's commitment to Europe. Secretary of State William P. Rogers, in an address to Overseas Writers on December 1, 1971, stated the following:

....the broadest interests of Western Europe and of the United States remain inseparable. And neither these (1971 temporary surcharge on imports) nor any other problems will cause us to abandon our support of western European alliance, or our commitment to a strong NATO alliance.

....we will not withdraw-in the economic

field, in the security field, or in the political field -- into remoteness or isolation from western Europe. Rather, in recognition of U.S. -- western European interdependence in all these fields, ³⁸we will remain committed and involved.

In the security field, the U.S. has not successfully demonstrated its commitment to NATO. During the early 1960's, the McNamara emphasis on conventional weapons, even in the event of large scale war suggested to many Europeans that the ingenuity reflected in those conceptions was not necessarily combined with political or strategic wisdom. Then, as the Vietnam conflict intensified, the U.S. redeployed American forces from Europe, signalling a possible lessening of interest in Europe.

The American experience in Vietnam ended in withdrawal with honor rather than a military victory, and the Nixon Doctrine proclaims a new form of American participation in the world. America's task in the years ahead will be to demonstrate to western Europe that U.S. retreat from overinvolvement does not mean underinvolvement with Europe.

Today, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union has a clearcut nuclear advantage, and this situation has caused Americans to modify their attitudes towards the problems of European defense. The U.S. does not

³⁸ William P. Rogers, "Our Permanent Interest in Europe", U.S. Foreign Policy, 1971, Department of State Publications, March 1972.

wish to avoid its responsibility to NATO, but no nation desires to initiate irresponsible acts that lead to general nuclear war. Overreliance on either nuclear weapons or conventional force is clearly the wrong path. The task ahead for NATO is to balance the two types of force into a militarily and politically credible deterrent and defensive force.

INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN NUCLEAR FORCES

Henry Kissinger has stated that NATO's nuclear dilemma developed because of the increasing inconsistency between the technical requirements of strategy and the political imperatives of the nation-state. Three factors have produced the difficulty: (1) the need for centralized control of military operations; (2) each major ally's growing desire to have substantial influence on common decisions, especially planning the controlled operations envisioned by the doctrine of flexible response; and (3) the wish to share in the prestige and political power that nuclear weapons are thought to confer.¹

RATIONALE FOR BRITISH INDEPENDENT FORCES

In the British case, the desire to develop a weapon to defeat Germany during World War II was the precipitating cause of British nuclear weapons research. After the war, Britain decided to continue the program, accelerating it with the development of the Cold War. Notions of sovereignty, nationalism, and Great Power status were behind Britain's postwar nuclear weapons development program.²

¹ Kissinger, "The Troubled Partnership", pp.117-118.

² Richard N. Rosecrance, "International Stability and Nuclear Diffusion", American Defense Policy, 2nd edition, ed. Mark A. Smith and Claude J. Johns, Jr., (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 142.

For many British the United Kingdom had to hold its own with the United States. Maintaining nuclear research and development programs testifies to their national technological prowess and is thought to secure them a position at the "top table" at allied and wider diplomatic negotiations, as well as upholding Britain's position as the primary ally of the United States.³

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN U.S. AND BRITAIN

Britain has maintained a close but sometimes stormy relationship with the U.S. in the field of nuclear weapons development. In secret wartime agreements, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill pledged in 1943 to interchange information in the development of "tube alloys" the British code name for nuclear weapons development; and in 1944, the two leaders agreed that full cooperation between their governments for military and commercial purposes should continue after the Japanese defeat unless terminated by joint agreement. At the close of the war, British and American attempts to renegotiate these agreements foundered for several reasons.⁴

Many Americans viewed atomic power as America's "priceless secret heritage" and were unwilling to share

³ Lawrence Martin, Arms and Strategy, (New York: David McKay Co., 1973), pp. 37-40.

⁴ Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation, (New York: Norton and Co., 1969), pp. 225-227.

further information. President Truman resisted enlarging bilateral collaboration with Britain in 1946 because the U.S. Congress was considering the Atomic Energy Act, and the U.N. Atomic Energy Commission was discussing America's proposal for international control of atomic energy. Also, senior military officers argued that the U.S. could not give Britain any more fissionable material until America had built more weapons.⁵

The issue remained unresolved, but attempts to reach a new agreement were spurred on by the 1949 Soviet explosion of a nuclear device. Negotiations were frozen in 1950 by a British spy scandal involving a British scientist who had been working on the Manhattan Project during the war and was convicted of passing information acquired from the project to the Soviets.⁶

The U.S. failed to completely honor its commitment to exchange nuclear information with Britain until General Eisenhower became President. He believed that "our (U.S.) military fate and theirs (Britain) were so interlocked that it made no sense to exclude one weapon -- which they would soon have anyway -- from the scope of our full partnership. The attempt to do so was already poisoning our relationship of mutual trust and if continued, could jeopardize our alliance".⁷ President

⁵ Acheson, pp. 228-230.

⁶ Acheson, pp. 414-421.

⁷ Acheson, p. 415.

Eisenhower supported amendment of the Atomic Energy Act, materials and information were again exchanged, and the matter was finally resolved without serious crisis in either government.

In 1960, the seeds were sown for a crisis involving Anglo-American nuclear weapons development which would bring the Anglo-American special relationship to its knees. In March 1960, Prime Minister Macmillan and President Eisenhower met at Camp David and agreed that Britain would purchase the Skybolt missile for use on the British V-bomber strategic deterrent force. The agreement was criticized in the British press as an American move to insure British nuclear dependence. Earlier, the U.S. had withdrawn support from the British designed Blue Streak missile because the missile's liquid-fuel propulsion system had been made obsolete by U.S. advances in solid-fuel technology. The withdrawal of support from Blue Streak and substitution of Skybolt, even though the U.S. undertook the entire cost of development, was greeted by London newspapers as a political move to maintain America's weapons hegemony within NATO.⁸

After three years, U.S. Defense Secretary McNamara cancelled Skybolt citing cost overruns and a strategically obsolete approach as the reasons. The impact on the British government was devastating. Prime Minister

⁸ Munnerley, pp. 127-133.

Macmillan and his Conservative Administration had staked "everything" on the Skybolt as an example of Anglo-American cooperation. Britain's future as a nuclear power appeared to be in doubt. Britain's relationship with France was seriously undermined. General deGaulle, in 1963, enjoyed tremendous popular support in France. The Algerian War was behind him, and French elections had strengthened his hand at a time when Britain's ruling Conservatives were seriously weakened and the American government was suffering a credibility gap in the foreign policy area.⁹

President Kennedy, at NASSAU, offered Polaris to Britain under conditions that would preserve the credibility of Britain's deterrent policy--Britain would commit the force to NATO but retain the right to withdraw it in a national emergency. British public reaction to the Skybolt crisis and Nassau Agreement was critical, arguing that the deal resulted in a Non-British Dependent Nuclear Non-Deterrent! President Kennedy offered Polaris to France on the same terms, but as David Kannerley wrote in President Kennedy and Britain:

"The General was much upset. Three weeks later, the Elysee Palace shook with his three-pronged reply to Kennedy's offer: it was NON to Polaris, NON to British entry into the Common Market, and, above all, NON to the Grand Design."¹⁰

⁹ Kannerley, pp. 151-153.

¹⁰ Kannerley, p. 161.

France undertook to develop nuclear weapons in the aftermath of the resounding defeat in Indo China and the beginning of the Algerian War. At that time, the U.S. was relying on nuclear weapons (massive retaliation) for the burden of military tasks, and the French perceived that nuclear weapons might in some measure compensate for past defeats and prevent future ones.¹¹

During the early 1960's, DeGaulle came to perceive France's nuclear weapons program as a tool to shape Europe's future, thereby guarantee France a predominant role in that future. Factors already discussed in this paper contributed to this perception -- the Kennedy Administration's performance during the Berlin crisis and Bay of Pigs invasion, U.S. insistence that NATO's doctrine of "massive retaliation" be replaced by "flexible response", U.S. insistence that European conventional force levels be increased at a time when the U.S. was pursuing policies of arms limitation and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the growing capability of the Soviet military and the apparant declining American commitment to Europe. These are just a few of the specific issues that may have influenced DeGaulle to pursue an independent course hoping to create a Europe centered around France's developing nuclear and economic strength, but the most compelling

¹¹ Rosecrance, p. 142.

reason must remain the French national concern for independence. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing restated this driving force in a recent interview with TIME correspondent George Taber:

Every time that the U.S. seeks a frank dialogue, bearing in mind our national concern for independence, problems can be brought up and, I think, solved. Whenever, explicitly or otherwise, the U.S. shows its will to predominate, there should be no surprise at a French refusal. The stated idea of an organized American leadership of the Western world is unacceptable, and France cannot admit it. France can accept partnership,¹² but she cannot accept (American) leadership.

French nuclear power was perceived by President DeGaulle as symbolic of France's independence. By possessing nuclear power, the French could not be pressured by either of the nuclear superpowers. This power was to support France's desire to establish French primacy in Western Europe, while containing the U.S. politically and economically.¹³ French nuclear power was to serve as the psychological mooring to tie Germany securely to Western interests and align German economic strength with France's European political ambitions.¹⁴

¹² George Taber, "Goals for a Complicated Nation", TIME, June 3, 1974, p. 20.

¹³ Robert Gilpin, France in the Age of the Scientific State, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 14-15.

¹⁴ Joshua, pp. 40-41.

DAGUILLER'S EUROPEAN POLICY

French foreign policy efforts encountered difficulties while operating from this premise. Two notable setbacks occurred in 1963 and 1966. In 1963, France sought to create a Bonn-Paris axis around which European unification could form. Both nations agreed in the French-German Treaty of Cooperation to formulate common economic and foreign policies, including the coordination of military strategy and weapons development. The French hoped the treaty would provide the foundation for formulating common European policy towards U.S. investments, leading to the development of a nucleus for a European community of sovereign nations independent of the United States.¹⁵

Germany sought to contribute to the establishment of a European federation into which she could turn her vast energies to good use without giving rise to revanchist concern among other European nations. Germans such as Franz Josef Strauss see a European federation as a hope for creating political ties with Western Europe which could make it possible to treat the German problem of reunification as a common European concern. Fears of a united Germany still linger in Europe, but if Germany could become part of a more closely united Europe, fear of a remilitarized and aggressive Germany might be eliminated.¹⁶

¹⁵ Gilpin, pp. 435-436.

France sought to replace U.S. influence in Europe. West Germany was not willing to replace U.S. military forces with French military pledges. West Germany has actively sought to maintain U.S. military presence in Germany. In 1972 Chancellor Brandt stated that the gap in military potential between the United States and Western Europe is continuously widening and that Europe alone could not guarantee her security effectively. American troops leaving Europe could hardly be replaced by Europeans, either with regard to their nuclear equipment or their political and strategic power.¹⁷ The West German government added a preamble to the treaty restating German desires to maintain close economic and military relationships with the United States. As a result of differing perspectives close French and German cooperation never developed.

During the last decade, France made various attempts to combine European nation-based industries to develop the economies of scale necessary to compete with American firms. Also, France attempted to persuade European nations to limit American investment in European industries. France proposed in 1966 that Common Market nations develop a uniform corporate law based upon an accord reached among the member states as a step towards combining nation-based industries. The Common Market

¹⁶ Strauss, pp. 115-117.

¹⁷ Willy Brandt, "Germany's Westpolitik", Foreign Affairs, 50 nr. 3, April 1972, pp. 416-426.

Commission pointed out that such uniformity in national laws would not solve how to transfer the headquarters of a corporation from one country to another with lengthy formalities. Nor could such a law overcome differences in various nations' tax systems, or a wide variety of existing merger statutes and bankruptcy regulations. The Commission proposed the formulation of a body of European law creating equality for corporations and shareholders so mergers would not involve a change of nationality.¹⁸ To the French, such a bold step would have been an invasion of sovereignty and could have frustrated national economic policies. It would have created Multinational Corporations (MNCs) which could have removed a significant part of a nation's economy from responsible national control.¹⁹ Clearly, such a move would have been in conflict with France's goal of establishing French primacy in Western Europe. Consequently, France rejected the proposal.

Having failed to develop a common economic policy with Germany as stipulated by the Treaty of Cooperation, France undertook to protect national businesses from the challenge of American capital investments in 1966. The French prevented Phillips Petroleum from establishing

¹⁸ J. J. Servan-Schreiber, The American Challenge, (New York: Atheneum House Inc., 1968), pp. 107-108.

¹⁹ John Diebold, "Multinational Corporations: Why be Scared of Them?", Foreign Policy, nr. 12, Fall 1973, pp. 64-85.

a headquarters in Bordeaux, B. F. Goodrich from buying into Kleber-Colombes, and General Motors from building a 100 million dollar plant in France. These companies simply went to Belgium and West Germany where American capital investment remained welcome. France could not persuade other European nations to reject or limit American investments and had to abandon the position.²⁰

France lacked the military strength and political credibility to assume leadership in Europe independent of the U.S.. French nationalism was threatening to Germany because it could have alienated the U.S., leaving Germans without either a psychological foundation or membership in a more united Europe. European nations such as Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands have preferred to be dependent upon the U.S. for scientific military and economic leadership rather than be dependent upon an expansionist France or a revisionist Germany.²¹

INFLUENCING COMMON DECISIONS

The second factor stated by Kissinger that has developed NATO's nuclear dilemma was each major ally's desire to have substantial influence on common decisions. This issue has been indirectly discussed. As Europeans perceived America's nuclear commitment diminishing, they pressed for a consensus regarding the use of tactical

²⁰ Gilpin, p. 416, pp. 435-436.

²¹ Gilpin, p. 416, pp. 435-436

nuclear weapons. This led to the agreement on the three step response in 1967 and to agreement in 1969 that nuclear weapons would be initially used against targets of military importance. France did not participate in these decisions because she had withdrawn from the integrated NATO command structure in 1966.

According to official French strategic thought during the mid-1960s, future wars would be fought with nuclear weapons. So long as nuclear weapons remain in the hands of national governments, decisions about their use would be made by leaders of nation-states. Starting with the conviction that national sovereignty was indivisible, the French argued that control of nuclear forces, as the most sensitive nerve of that sovereignty, was equally indivisible.²²

It appears that France's views on national sovereignty and indivisibility of nuclear control have remained unaltered, judging by this statement made by French Defense Minister Michel Debré in 1971:

"Nuclear risk is not divisible....that risk is so enormous that people would accept it only as a final defense of their supreme self-interest."²³

NATO, under American leadership, following American strategic doctrine, did not give France a satisfactory

²² Joshua, p. 40.

²³ Michel Debré, "France's Global Strategy", Foreign Affairs, April 1971, p. 397.

voice in the integrated command structure, and France would not assume a leadership role within NATO. Still, other nations were not willing to substitute French leadership for American leadership outside of NATO.²⁴

Paradoxically, French withdrawal from the integrated NATO structure has been viewed by the French as giving them greater influence over U.S. strategic doctrine than they could have exerted within the structure. The loss of French soldiers, reluctance on the part of other European nations to raise force levels, and U.S. domestic pressures to decrease force levels in Europe, in the French view, increase the likelihood that the United States will be pushed toward a strategic doctrine which places greater emphasis on nuclear weapons.²⁵

THE NEED FOR CENTRALIZED CONTROL

The problem of retaining substantial influence over common decisions is closely related to Kissinger's third factor -- the need for centralized control of military operations. From 1961, when the United States reoriented American military forces to allow a greater conventional capacity, until 1963, the Kennedy Administration stressed that Europe's contribution to NATO be limited to a conventional role. The risks and undertainties

²⁴ Pfaltzgraff, pp. 41-55

²⁵ Pfaltzgraff, pp. 41-42.

raised by the introduction of nuclear weapons into an area of conflict required tight control, although such control became inconsistent to some degree with a coalition of sovereign states. The McNamara cost-effectiveness analysis approach to the issue of nuclear control was apparent in U.S. statements regarding this problem during the early 1960s. U.S. official spokesmen consistently emphasized that any European contribution to the over-all nuclear strength of the Alliance was negligible, and Europeans would more efficiently use their resources if they would increase their conventional contribution and let the U.S. handle the nuclear commitment.²⁶ European nuclear forces were described as "provocative" and "weak". The McNamara pentagon considered that the U.S. strategic deterrent had to have the capability to destroy 50 percent of the Soviet industrial capacity and 20 percent of the Soviet population to be credible. In these terms, no European effort could have been credible, for neither France nor Britain intended to build a strategic force large enough to accomplish such a task. Since European nuclear forces were not credible, according to the McNamara analysis, they were prone to preemptive destruction.

²⁶ Henry A. Kissinger, "Coalition Diplomacy in a Nuclear Age", American Defense Policy, 2nd Edition, ed. Mark S. Smith and Claude J. Johns, Jr., (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins Press, 1963), pp. 182-183.

The credibility problem of independent European nuclear forces was closely related to President Kennedy's Grand Design for Europe. His Administration pursued the goal of helping the development of a united Europe, including Britain, into a free-trading community. The United States would then form a partnership with such a federated Europe on the basis of true equality of status. A coordinated military-strategic program was to have been part of the design, but the military interdependence proposed by the U.S. Defense Department meant a continuing reliance on the American nuclear deterrent. European efforts to provide a nuclear deterrent were counter-productive to the Kennedy Administration's policy towards the Atlantic Community. The interdependence Kennedy sought meant that European states would have had to surrender their national sovereignty, a development that was not likely. American attempts to encourage greater European participation in the doctrine of "flexible response" came to be seen as a further assertion of U.S. hegemony concealing dubious political motives.²⁷

MLF

In 1963, following the NASSAU Agreement and DeGaulle's rejection of the Grand Design, America could no longer stress that Europe's contribution to a common defense effort be limited to a conventional role and sought a

²⁷ Kunnerley, p. 185-186.

device for sharing the odium of nuclear responsibility.

The multi-lateral nuclear force (MLF) became that device. The MLF was seen as the means to foster inter-dependence while providing centralized command and control.²⁸ Originally the MLF was to have been a force of Polaris submarines jointly financed and operated by NATO governments, each of which was to have a veto on the firing of their missiles. Later, because the "linked manning" was to be applied to individual vessels and would have created special hazards for submarine operations, the scheme was modified to allow for a force of twenty five surface ships armed with Polaris missiles.²⁹

From a military standpoint, MLF was technically complicated and of questionable military value. The U.S. decision to substitute a force of surface ships for the submarines was viewed by many Europeans, especially the French, as a move to an inferior force designed to pacify European desires to influence decisions on the use of nuclear weapons while the U.S. retained a superior submarine force for a national deterrent. By sponsoring two deterrent forces, the U.S. fell victim to its own criticism of independent nuclear forces -- the NATO surface force would add little to the overall deterrent and represented an inefficient allocation of resources

²⁸ Munnerley, p. 186-187.
Pfaltzgraff, p. 44-46.

²⁹ Brodie, p. 199-201.

to NATO's defense posture.³⁰

Germany supported the proposal, because it offered the West German government a voice in the control of nuclear weapons. Britain was opposed to it because the MLF concept meant the British would lose their independent national deterrent. The British countered with a proposal for the creation of an Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF) which would have provided a NATO nuclear force composed of national contingents, thus preserving the British national force. Germany opposed this plan because it provided for only modest German participation, and Germany wanted a greater voice in Western strategy. France viewed MLF as an abduction of national sovereignty. Norway and Denmark opposed MLF and ANF because they considered the forces to be a proliferation of nuclear capabilities.³¹

Robert Pfaltzgraff has analyzed the opposition of smaller NATO countries such as Norway and Denmark to the building of a European nuclear force or to the development of national atomic capabilities in Western Europe. He believes smaller countries are generally convinced that in an age of nuclear weapons and technologically advanced delivery systems they cannot provide for their own defense. Only the United States can provide a credible

³⁰ Pfaltzgraff, p. 50-51.

³¹ Pfaltzgraff, p. 46-52.

deterrent and defense. The substitution of an European nuclear deterrent by Britain or France or of a European combined force would not have the credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee. In addition, smaller NATO countries might have no greater influence than they have at present. Hence, they have little incentive to seek major changes in the existing NATO structure.³²

Late in 1964, President Johnson reviewed the MLF proposal and ordered that U.S. pressures for its adoption be relaxed. MLF had been a "hardware" solution to the strategic dissensus within NATO, and had failed to provide central command and control consistent with the needs of independent nation-states. Subsequently, the U.S. pressed for a non-hardware solution to the problem of nuclear control that would be compatible with the U.S. objectives of non-proliferation, East-West arms control, and preserving the NATO alliance. In December 1966, two permanent groups for nuclear planning were established. The first, the Nuclear Defense Affairs Committee, is open to membership to all NATO nations for general planning. Subordinate to the committee is the Nuclear Planning Group.³³ These bodies provide the framework for continuing examination of strategic issues and the development of common policies on arms control and disarmament including

³² Pfaltzgraff, p. 50.

³³ Pfaltzgraff, pp. 51-52.

issues related to nuclear proliferation. These bodies are not able to resolve specific military problems especially so long as France remains outside the integrated command system, but so long as the perceived threat of an actual Soviet invasion remains low, determination of specific military issues may possibly be postponed. Effective consultation has provided the first step towards resolving NATO's strategic dissensus. Although NATO nations maintain differing desires regarding the Alliance, frank discussion of these differences may help develop a consensus workable so long as an effective nuclear deterrent can be maintained.

SOLVING THE DISSENSUS - A NEW NATO STRATEGY

The restoration of Atlantic strategic consensus depends upon the willingness of both the United States and West European countries to modify their prevailing strategic doctrines. For the United States, the need for changes is especially great, since conventional force levels in Europe are not likely to remain adequate to support the doctrine of "flexible response". Detente and the diminishing threat of general war in Europe coupled with the possibility of successful SALT and MBFR negotiations are likely to push NATO toward a strategy which gives greater emphasis to nuclear weapons than the present official doctrine. Even in the unlikely event that the threat of war were to increase in Europe, it is doubtful that "flexible response" could be made workable. France could probably not be counted upon to rejoin NATO commands in support of the present doctrine.

The proper balance between nuclear deterrent forces and conventional or general purpose forces is difficult to determine. Today, pressures are great for increased reliance on nuclear weapons. The United States is considering a greater counterforce capability for the U.S. national strategic system. It is argued that such a development would provide a U.S. limited response in the event of limited Soviet aggression. It could also be argued, that such a development would

eliminate the contradiction that exists between U.S. national strategic doctrine and NATO strategic posture. In light of military and political issues examined in this paper, it can be shown that such a proposal cannot provide a nuclear guarantee for the United States or NATO without retaining and modernizing adequate conventional forces as well.

The threat of nuclear weapons has not deterred limited forms of Soviet aggression during the last decade. If one believes that future Soviet aggression is likely to be more of an open direct confrontation with the U.S., increasing a counterforce option could augment the U.S. strategic deterrent. Soviet weapons development indicates that they are pursuing the capability to directly challenge American military forces at various points of the globe. A strategic counterforce doctrine would be effective to counter developing Soviet military power only if the Soviets believed the U.S. would initiate a strategic strike against their forces. To initiate such a strike, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union would have to be convinced that general nuclear war could be prevented. After the introduction of nuclear weapons, I am not convinced that escalation could be avoided. .

The development of a counterforce capability could present the U.S. with a first-strike potential which would inspire intensified strategic arms development by the Soviets. For the superpowers, the benefits derived

from a new strategic arms race are likely to be small in relation to the costs of such programs. The effect on independent European nuclear forces could be extremely destabilizing as Britain and France found their strategic forces becoming rapidly obsolete in another superpower arms race. In this situation, Britain and France would become increasingly dependent upon a U.S. guarantee of deterrence, a guarantee that would not be convincing either in light of Soviet strategic arms developments or past American diplomatic performances. The U.S. has never invoked nuclear weapons although American nuclear forces have been placed on alert. Now, as America attempts to retract from over involvement in world affairs in the post-Vietnam atmosphere, the likelihood that the U.S. would invoke nuclear weapons in any circumstance other than a direct attack upon the U.S. seems to be diminished.

One possible solution would be for France and Britain to combine nuclear technological efforts. However, such a development would be hard to reconcile with French beliefs about the indivisibility of nuclear power and national sovereignty. For the British, cooperation with the French could mean the loss of the special relationship with America in the area of nuclear research and development.

Robert Gilpin, in France in the Age of the Scientific State, has pointed out that nations are reluctant to collaborate in areas of military importance for fear their industries related to military potential may atrophy.¹

French and British cooperation on nuclear weapons programs presents special problems. Great Britain has developed a nuclear weapons program through cooperation with the U.S.. Such cooperation has not been extended to France. From the British view, Anglo-French cooperation could breach technical secrets from the U.S. and rupture the partnership with the U.S.. Britain would have to gain permission from the U.S. before it could release much information under the terms of the U.S. Atomic Energy Act and the 1958 U.S.-British Agreement for Nuclear Cooperation.² From the French point of view, British nuclear expertise would be second-hand U.S. derived technology and still fail to place France on a par with Britain vis-a-vis the U.S.. Technically France would be better off obtaining support directly from the U.S.. In either event, the U.S. congress Joint Committee on Atomic energy would have to give its support to such negotiations.³ U.S. Congressional support would surely not be overwhelming in light of continuing French actions to assert foreign policies counter to U.S. interests. Witness the recently held meeting of oil consuming nations in Washington.

Another obstacle to an Anglo-French nuclear arrangement would be the problem of West Germany's relationship

1 Gilpin, pp. 427-428.

2 Martin, p. 45.

3 Joshua, pp. 42-43.

to such a combine. Germany, Britain, and France agreed in 1954 not to manufacture nuclear weapons on German soil, and Germany and Great Britain have both signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Yet Germany has the strongest industrial and economic component in Europe and could provide advanced electronic technology that could be used to improve guidance systems.⁴

If an Anglo-French nuclear program were to develop, West Germany would find it hard to accept a position of inferiority in Western Europe and might fear such a nuclear entente would hasten American troop withdrawals from Europe.⁵ On the other hand, technological cooperation or even allowing components of such a force to be stationed on German soil would be hard to reconcile with Germany's "Ostpolitik". Even more important, a purely European deterrent could not substitute for American strategic forces. For Germany and smaller European nations who have historically opposed the proliferation of nuclear weapons into Europe, a European deterrent coupled with American withdrawal or a further deterioration of American-European relations, lessening the credibility of any American guarantee would increase Western Europe's vulnerability to Soviet military aggression or political meddling.

⁴ Martin, p. 46.

⁵ Joshua, p. 43.

To me, it is clear that a new "hardware" approach to the problem of strategic deterrence would be no more effective than the previous ILE effort. Instead, America's commitment to Europe must be reiterated in terms of renewed efforts to solve the military, political, and economic issues that now separate the NATO countries. In the area of strategic deterrence, renewing the superpower arms race would not be such an effort. If America must intensify efforts to develop a greater counterforce option to match such a Soviet development, let it be a limited effort, not a major reorientation of U.S. strategic posture. Since the likelihood of British-French nuclear cooperation is small, the U.S. should not propose or pursue such a development. However, America could recognize the contribution of independent nuclear forces by encouraging coordination of targets and consolidation of ballistic missile submarine patrols in the Nuclear Planning Group. Such an effort would provide retention of national command and control of deterrent forces while providing nations who lack nuclear weapons a voice in formulating NATO nuclear policy.

The proper balance between tactical nuclear weapons and conventional forces on the European continent remains elusive. Certain aspects of this issue seem to have been clearly defined however. Tactical nuclear weapons, alone, are neither a credible defense nor a credible deterrent. Conventional forces do underpin diplomatic action and

provide an alternative to suicide or surrender. American forces in Europe provide a political deterrent that underscores America's commitment to European defense.

Tactical nuclear weapons cannot provide a credible offense. To excessively rely upon such weapons lessens NATO's capability to drive into Eastern Europe in the event of Soviet aggression against Western Europe. Such a recognition of the present status-quo could encourage the Soviets to pursue a more aggressive global foreign policy. The U.S. or a more closely united Western Europe could not support German hopes for reunification without maintaining military offensive capability in Europe. Providing the Soviets a guarantee that under no circumstances would they lose territory in a military confrontation with the West would free them of a great deal of risk when calculating military moves or political strategies in areas where any final outcome cannot be clearly forecast.

It may be that the threat of general war is diminishing, but the possibility of direct superpower confrontation is increasing as the Soviets continue to build-up their military forces. For America or NATO to deny themselves the conventional strength necessary to underpin diplomatic actions in the years ahead would be tantamount to either surrender or living on the brink of nuclear disaster.

These issues must be tackled in NATO planning

although, at present, it appears that chances for their resolution are small. Detente may be a blessing in disguise if NATO grasps the opportunity to reconcile the military dissensus. The opportunity is present to develop a NATO doctrine somewhere between the extremes of a unilateral American guarantee or a continuation of the present fragmented dissensus.

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